



'Thy Word Is a Lamp To My Feet And a Light To My Path'
Psalm 119 v 105

St Mark's Church of England Early Years & Primary School

RE: Arrangements for returning to school

Dear Parents and Carers

I would like to begin by offering a huge 'thank you' for the well wishes that you have sent the school and your continual efforts to support your child with their home learning. I also hope that this email finds you and your family safe and well.

As you will be aware, the government has announced that, so long as they are satisfied that it will be safe enough to do so, schools will reopen from 1st June 2020 for children in **Nursery, Reception, Y1 and Y6**. St Mark's will also continue to operate a childcare facility for:

- **Children of critical workers**
- **Vulnerable pupils: those with a EHCP, with a Social Worker, or those with vulnerability to whom the school have decided to offer a childcare place.**

We are very much looking forward to seeing your children once again and this letter details the arrangements that we have decided are the best way for St. Mark's to ensure the safety of all staff, pupils and parents. These arrangements have been put into place following a full risk assessment and are in line with guidance from the Local Authority, LDBS and the Department for Education.

I appreciate that some of you might be disappointed that your children are not immediately returning to school but this has to be a phased and considered partial re-opening. I also recognise that some of you have reservations about sending your children to school. The Government has said that parents will not be penalised if they do not send their child to school when their child's class re-opens but I encourage you to continue to engage with us so that we can welcome them back when you are confident that the time is right.

Class sizes

Thank you to the families of children in Nursery, Reception, Y1 and 6 who completed the online survey sent to you last week. This has been very helpful in planning how to reopen. Children will be put into small groups in which they will be taught and have breaks.

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Headteacher: Martha Braithwaite

Deputy Head: Matt Jones

In line with the scientific guidance in place to reduce the risk of the school having to close completely should a child or staff member become ill, children will be unable to mix with any children outside of their group. **This means we will be unable to provide a breakfast club or afterschool service from June.**

Phased re-opening

To make sure that the re-introduction of your child(ren) to school goes as smoothly as possible we have put in place the following plan. Please read this carefully to be clear when your child(ren) can come back to school.

<p><u>Monday</u> <u>1st June</u></p>	<p>INSET DAYS: School closed for ALL pupils This will enable us to reconfigure the classrooms to comply with social distancing requirements and staff to be trained on our new way of operating.</p>
<p><u>Tuesday</u> <u>2nd June</u></p>	
<p><u>Wednesday</u> <u>3rd June</u></p>	<p>School re-opens for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The children of identified critical Key Workers • Vulnerable groups • First Y6 group • First nursery group <p>Please note – your child’s place MUST be agreed in advance otherwise we will have to send them home.</p> <p>If you believe you are a new key worker, you will need to send through proof of this from your employer. <i>Places for key worker children are only for those children where there is no one else at home to look after the child.</i></p> <p>All children must wear school uniform. Please ensure this is washed daily to reduce the risk of contamination.</p>
<p><u>Thursday</u> <u>4th June</u></p>	<p>The 2nd group of Y6 children will start school</p>
<p><u>Friday</u> <u>5th June</u></p>	<p>As above</p>
<p><u>Monday</u> <u>8th June onwards</u></p>	<p>All children who attended last week plus :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first group of Reception • Y1 children

Please do not bring your child to school unless we have contacted you as we will not be able to accommodate them.

We will keep this plan under constant review and please be assured that we will not roll it out completely unless we are satisfied that it is safe to do so. **Any further increase of children in these classes will be phased, based on a daily assessment.**

Arrangements for the start and end of the school day

The beginning and end of the school day are the busiest times for children and adults congregating together in one place and maintaining safe distances within normal arrangements can be a challenge. Therefore, until further notice, **only one parent will be able to enter the site at drop off and pick up and no parents will be able to enter the school building without prior arrangement. Please do not crowd school entrances.**

Here is the timetable for drop-off and pick-up:

	Nursery	Reception	Y1	Y6	Key worker
Entrance am	Mitford Rd	Sussex Way Gate	Sussex Way Gate	Sussex Way Gate	Sussex Way
Time of arrival	9.15	9.00	9.05	8.55	9.00
Dismissal point	Mitford Rd	Pitch gate	Outdoor area/main playground	Playground	Y2 Outdoor area
Pick up time	1.15-1.30 You will be allocated a specific slot	2.00-2.15 You will be allocated a specific slot	2.30-2.45 You will be allocated a specific slot	3.00-3.15 You will be allocated a specific slot	3.15-3.30 You will be allocated a specific slot

On Fridays, **Year 6 children will be dismissed at 2.00 pm** to enable staff to have their planning time and the deep clean of the school to start.

We understand that for families with more than one child attending there will be different drop off and pick up times. Please ensure that you adhere to each groups allocated time slot for the safety of everyone. Failure to do so will risk you losing your place.

As we cannot allow the children to mix with those outside of their group, we are not currently able to provide breakfast club or after school provision.

Arrangements for break times and lunchtimes

Reconnecting with friends will be an important aspect of pupils settling back into school life and we have made some adjustments to break and lunch times to make this as safe as possible.

- Staggered play times in their groups
- Zoned areas of the playground
- Lunch in a bag, including hot and cold items
- Early Years and Nursery eating in their classrooms or outside
- Water fountains taken out of use
- Climbing equipment out of use but access to our exciting new areas made available.

School Trips

- There will be no school trips taking place in the foreseeable future. This will be reviewed as the situation changes

Maintaining a safe school environment

We continue to work extremely hard to make St. Mark's a safe environment for your child(ren).

As per the advice from the government, the following actions remain in place:

- Displaying coronavirus infection control measures information posters around the school
- Encouraging age appropriate social distancing.
- Encouraging good hygiene by promoting the importance of handwashing for at least 20 seconds with warm water and soap as children arrive and leave school and throughout the day.
- The use of alcohol-based hand sanitiser dispensers that contain at least 60 percent alcohol throughout the school
- Ensuring pupils and staff understand that they must cover their cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue away
- Ensuring frequently touched objects and surfaces are cleaned and disinfected more regularly than usual
- Calling NHS 111 if someone becomes unwell, isolating any unwell people in a separate room, and providing a separate bathroom, where possible
- Telling staff to stay at home for seven days if they develop symptoms of coronavirus or until a test result is negative for coronavirus
- Providing staff training on PPE, rubbish disposal, mental health and well-being.

As an important part of our school community, I would ask that you continue to encourage good infection control practices, such as thorough handwashing, at home and keep your child informed about the things they can do to discourage the spread of the virus.

What if my child is unwell?

If you think your child may have been exposed to or has coronavirus, or if your child receives a positive test result for coronavirus, please contact the school immediately.

In line with the current NHS and government advice, you should keep your child at home if they develop coronavirus symptoms for a period of seven days. They can return earlier if they test negative for coronavirus. Symptoms include a high temperature or a new, continuous cough. Where symptoms continue after seven days, or begin to worsen, you should call 111. If someone in your child's household has symptoms, your child must self-isolate for 14 days from the day the other person's symptoms started. This is because it can take 14 days for symptoms to appear. More information regarding symptoms and actions can be found on the NHS website (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>).

What happens if someone in school tests positive for the virus?

If a child or staff member tests positive, the rest of their class or group will be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. The other household members of that wider class or group do not need to self-

isolate unless the child, young person or staff member they live with in that group subsequently develops symptoms.

How can I get a test?

All staff and children who attend school will have access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus, and are encouraged to get tested in this scenario. To access testing parents will be able to use the 111 online coronavirus service if their child is 5 or over. Parents will be able to call 111 if their child is aged under 5. Where the child, young person or staff member tests negative, they can return to their setting and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation.

Transition from Year 6 to Year 7

As I'm sure that you are, the staff are extremely disappointed that Y6 have not been able to complete their time at St Mark's or prepare for secondary school in the normal way. Despite this, we will still be doing everything that we can to support these pupils to be ready. This includes:

- Liaising closely with our secondary schools to make sure they know all of the important information about your child.
- A six-part transition project with our educational consultant Tracey Campbell
- Providing bespoke lessons and guidance for year 6 pupils about transferring to secondary school.

We will answer any questions that they have and support them with any concerns so that they can make the best possible start.

Your child(ren)'s emotional well-being

Life during lockdown will have affected everyone in our school community in different ways and I am aware that children and staff will return to school feeling quite differently to when they left. During this very unusual time in education, I believe that children's well-being must take an increased priority alongside learning so our key focus will be to support their social, emotional and mental health development. Once children are ready, we will be able to start rebuilding their learning. This will be different for every child based on their own experiences over these past few weeks.

If you would like to talk to us about your child and any concerns you have about their return to school, please – in the first instance – contact the school office.

I look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure the best outcomes for our children and school community in these challenging times.

Yours sincerely,
Martha Braithwaite